



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

**December 4, 2014**

## **New Johnsonville Mayor Uses City Resources for Personal Benefit**

A special investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury reveals that New Johnsonville Mayor Lance Loveless directly benefited from the use of city personnel, city money, and a city vehicle.

On September 6, 2012 the public works director and a city contract employee drove a city truck and a trailer to Columbia, South Carolina to retrieve a personal vehicle for Mayor Loveless.

On the return trip to New Johnsonville the city truck broke down in Unicoi County, TN. Mayor Loveless engaged a towing service for \$990 and directed the city recorder to charge the city for the cost of the tow. The city truck, trailer, and personal vehicle were towed to Madison, TN where a new engine was installed in the city truck at a cost to the city of \$5,500.

Comptroller investigators determined the payroll, gasoline, and towing costs paid with taxpayer funds for the Mayor's personal benefit was at least \$1,732.

Although Mayor Loveless maintains he was unaware the public works director had taken a city truck on his personal errand, the public works director says the Mayor instructed him to use a city truck. Mayor Loveless acknowledges he knew the city truck was being used when he ordered the cost of the towing service to be paid by the city.

On December 1, Lance Loveless was indicted by the Humphreys County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$1,000.

In July 2014 Mayor Loveless paid the city \$1,182, the cost of the towing and the fuel. The public works director's leave balance was reduced by two days. This occurred after the trip was exposed in a television news report.

"It is clear that Mayor Loveless abused taxpayer money," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "By the Mayor's own admission, he kept the true nature of this trip from the city council and the public."

To view the special investigation report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

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